Urban Pleasures

NEW YORK 1900–1940

Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris

February 7–April 3, 1986

MAURICE PRENDERGAST

May Day, Central Park, c. 1901
Watercolor on paper, 14½ x 21⅝ inches
Exchange 48.19

Urban Pleasures: New York 1900–1940

Selections from the Permanent Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art

A few years ago, some early nineteenth-century red-brick row houses were being restored down on Pearl Street, next to the Fraunces Tavern. A small archaeological "dig" was begun in the cellar of one of the houses, which had been built upon landfill, where once upon a time the open sea had lapped at the shore of the village of Nieuw Amsterdam. The dig proceeded down through the usual domestic debris that our ancestors were accustomed to throwing into the sea—broken goblets, shards of blue china—until it reached the smooth sand of the primordial harbor bottom, upon which was found resting a single peachpit. Plainly, some seventeenth-century Dutch burgher had strolled along the shore on a fine summer's evening, taking his ease and munching a ripe peach from a nearby orchard; finishing the last delicious morsel of peach, he had spat the pit as far out into the tranquil green seawater as he was able, watching with a satisfied eye as it sank from sight. That was an urban pleasure for him, and no doubt he had many others as well: simple pleasures in a simple time.

Three hundred years later, our urban pleasures have become more sophisticated, if not more intense. (After all, even the costive T. S. Eliot could be moderately aroused by the thought of a ripe peach.) After a few unlucky detours into puritanical severity and Victorian prudery, in the twentieth century we have regained a measure of our Dutch heritage as pagan sensualists, delighted by food, drink and the welcomely infinite resources of the human body. In the first four decades of this century, some of our leading artists took care to depict for us certain urban pleasures that continue up to the present day to defy the notorious, nerve-wracking stresses of New York City and that serve as our reward for successfully surviving here. A delectable assortment of works by these artists has been plucked from the Permanent Collection of the Whitney Museum and placed on view to refresh our recollection of a happy past and to hint, as the century races to its close, that the future is not without promise. For do we not continue to share opening nights, election nights, bonfires in the wintry streets of the Village, honky-tonk dancehalls, perilous bars, and all the brassy clamor and silvery moonshine of this greatest of cities? Are we not all, whether openly or in secret, eaters of peaches?

BRENDAN GILL

John Sloan
Bonfire, 1920
Etching: sheet, 9 3/16 x 12 1/2; image, 5 1/16 x 7 1/4
Purchase 31.865

Checklist

Dimensions are in inches: height precedes width. The dimensions of all drawings, with the exception of Maurice Prendergast, Madison Square, *are sight—measured within the frame or mat.*

PAINTINGS

George Bellows (1882–1925)

Introducing John L. Sullivan, 1923
Oil on paper mounted on composition board, 21 x 21
Gift of the Trust U-D John Hay Whitney dated December 29, 1959 83.2.2

Paul Cadmus (b. 1904)

Shore Leave, 1933
Oil on canvas, 33 x 36
Gift of an anonymous donor, subject to life interest 64.43

Guy Pène du Bois (1884–1958)

Jeanne Eagels in "Rain." 1922
Oil on canvas, 84¾ x 48
Purchase 31.181

Wood Gaylor (1883–1957)

Off to Europe, c. 1925
Oil on canvas, 17 x 26
Gift of Howard and Jean Lipman 81.21.3

William J. Glackens (1870–1938)

Parade, Washington Square, 1912
Oil on canvas, 26 x 31
Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.215

George Luks (1867–1933)

Armistice Night, 1918
Oil on canvas, 37 x 68¾
Gift of an anonymous donor 54.58

Reginald Marsh (1898–1954)

Ten Cents a Dance, 1933
Egg tempera on panel, 36 x 48
Felicia Meyer Marsh Bequest 80.31.10

Negroes On Rockaway Beach, 1934
Egg tempera on composition board, 30 x 40
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Hackett 61.2

Minsky's Chorus, 1935
Tempera on composition board, 29¾ x 35⅞
Partial and promised gift of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Hackett in honor of Edith and Lloyd Goodrich P.5.83

Everett Shinn (1876–1953)

Revue, 1908
Oil on canvas, 18 x 24
Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.346

John Sloan (1871–1951)

Sixth Avenue Elevated at Third Street, 1928
Oil on canvas, 30 x 40
Purchase 36.154

William Zorach (1889–1966)

The Roof Playground, 1917
Oil on canvas, 29 x 23¾
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur G. Altshul 71.231

DRAWINGS AND WATERCOLORS

Glenn O. Coleman (1887–1932)

Street Bathers, c. 1906
Crayon on paper, 11 x 15¾
Purchase 32.44

Guy Pène du Bois (1884–1958)

Opera, 1907
Crayon and pencil on paper, 14⅞ x 12⅜
Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.532

First Night, Theater Guild, 1928
Ink on paper, 11¾ x 10⅞
Purchase 31.531

William J. Glackens (1870–1938)

Park by East River, c. 1914
Pastel on paper, 14⅛ x 19
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Raymond J. Horowitz 74.107

Reginald Marsh (1898–1954)

New Dodgem, 1940
Watercolor on paper, 40¼ x 26¾
Gift of the artist, and gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, by exchange 53.21

Maurice Prendergast (1859–1924)

Central Park, 1900
Watercolor on paper, 14⅜ x 21½
Purchase 32.41

Central Park, 1901
Watercolor on paper. 14⅜ x 21½
Purchase 32.42

Madison Square, c. 1901
Watercolor on paper, 15 x 16½
Joan Whitney Payson Bequest 76.14

May Day, Central Park, c. 1901
Watercolor on paper, 14½ x 21⅜
Exchange 48.19

PRINTS

Paul Cadmus (b. 1904)

Stewart's, 1934
Etching: sheet, 11 3/16 x 15¾; image, 7 5/16 x 11 15/16
Purchase 34.39

Glenn O. Coleman (1887–1932)

Bonfire, from the series *Lithographs of New York*, 1928
Lithograph: sheet, 15⅞ x 22¾; image, 13 3/16 x 18 5/16
Gift of Mrs. Herbert B. Lazarus 73.90

Election Night Bonfire, from the series *Lithographs of New York*, 1928
Lithograph: sheet, 15⅞ x 21⅛; image, 12⅛ x 17
Gift of Juliana Force 31.698.11

Hurdy-Gurdy Ballet, from the series *Lithographs of New York*, 1928
Lithograph: sheet, 16 3/16 x 20¼; image, 12 3/16 x 15 3/16
Gift of Juliana Force 31.698.12

James Daugherty (1890–1974)

Right This Way! Sensations of the Color, Movement, and Noise at Coney Island, 1914
Color reproduction for the *New York Sunday Herald*, May 31, 1914, 25 x 18
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Daugherty 77.24

Broadway Nights, 1915
Color reproduction for the *New York Sunday Herald*, January 31, 1915, 22¾ x 16⅝
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Daugherty 77.26

Adolf Dehn (1895–1968)

Up in Harlem, 1932
Lithograph: sheet, 12¾ x 18: image, 8¾ x 13¾
Purchase 32.131

John Sloan (1871–1951)

Man Monkey, 1905
Etching: sheet, 9 7/16 x 12 9/16: image, 4 5/16 x 7
Purchase 31.818

Bonfire, 1920
Etching: sheet, 9 3/16 x 12½: image, 5 1/16 x 7¼
Purchase 31.865

Boys Sledding, 1920
Etching: sheet, 9½ x 12¾; image, 5¼ x 7
Purchase 31.866

Busses in Washington Square, 1925
Etching: sheet, 12 3/16 x 16 15/16; image, 7¾ x 9⅞
Purchase 31.880

Easter Eve, 1926
Etching and aquatint: sheet, 17⅜ x 12⅜; image, 9 5/16 x 7⅞
Purchase 31.885

John Sloan
Easter Eve, 1926
Etching and aquatint: sheet, 17⅜ x 12⅜; image, 9 5/16 x 7⅞
Purchase 31.885

The works in this exhibition were selected by Susan Lubowsky, Branch Director, Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris, and Patterson Sims, Associate Curator, Permanent Collection. Special thanks are extended to intern Judith Solomon, who helped with research.

Funding for the Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris is provided by Philip Morris Companies Inc.

Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris
120 Park Avenue
New York, New York 10017

Gallery Hours
Monday–Saturday 11:00 am–6:00 pm
Thursday until 7:30 pm
Free Admission

Sculpture Court Hours
Monday–Saturday 7:30 am–9:30 pm
Sunday 11:00 am–7:00 pm
Free Admission

Gallery Talks
Monday, Wednesday, Friday at 12:30 pm
Tours by appointment
For information call (212) 878-2550

Staff
Susan Lubowsky
Branch Director

Jeanette Vuocolo
Branch Manager

Amy Dion
Gallery Assistant

Design
Elizabeth Finger

Typesetting
Craftsman Type Inc.

Printing
Eastern Press, Inc.

© 1986 Whitney Museum of American Art